Calverley, Edwin E., Rev.

[Kennedy School of Missions

Hartford, CT]

1930

Kennedy School of Missions
Hartford, Connecticut 22 October 1930

Mr Howland Woods,
Curator, American Numismatic Society,
New York City.

Dear Sir:-

Mr Farsan Zerbe has referred me to you for the best information available regarding two Arabian coins I have. The coin is the Tawilah (طويلة) of al-Hasa. It is listed in Philby's "Heart of Arabia" and mentioned in the Bents "Southern Arabia" and Palgrave gives an account of it in his "Journey in Eastern Arabia." He calls it "an entirely original and a perfectly local coinage" and says "Along one of its flattened sides runs a few Cufic characters, indicating the name of the Carmathian prince under whose auspices this choice production of Arabian numismatics was issued; nothing else is to be read on the Tawelah, neither date nor motto."

But the Encyclopaedia of Islam III, 18 calls it "a degenerate descendant of the Larin." Yule's "Hobson-Jobson" mentions the Larin but not the Tawilah. The Ency of Islam refers also to the Numismatic Chronicle London 1914, p. 162-164; 1912 p. 319 (Leaves of Hormuz) (Rutherford Palgrave article on medieval Sistan) 329 1852, p. 180. There is no file of this journal in Hartford.

I should like to know whether Palgrave is correct in his statement that the Tawilah is a Carmathian coinage and its approximate date and any other accurate information about it that may be available.

Kennedy School of Missions
Hartford, Connecticut

The coins are now not in common use in al-Hasa and are increasingly rare. One of mine is of copper and the others of silver. Cheesman in his "Unknown Arabia" gives a picture of the Tawrlah.

Trusting that your interest in the subject will keep a reply from being a bother I am,

Yours sincerely,

(Rev.) Edwin E. Calverley

(Missionary in Arabia since 1910)

October 24,1930

Rev. Edwin E.Calverley
Kennedy School of Missions
Hartford, Conn.

Dear Sir:

Concerning the towilah struck in Nedg, very little is known about these. I should judge from your reading that you have gotten about as much information as is available in printed form. The Numismatic Chronicle for 1914, has an article on Larins of Hormus, and illustrates one or two pieces similar to the towilah, but with the names of kings of Hormus on them, and says nothing about Nedj pieces. The 1912 number has an article on Larins and coins of the Maldive Islands, and takes up Larins in general. The only reference to the Nedj pieces is in a verbatim copy from Palgrave. The 1850 reference that you give is evidently a misprint as nothing on the subject is in the Chronicle for that year. However, for several years previous to this date there are various articles on Larins, but nothing of importance as we look at the subject, as they appear to be the first printed descriptions of this form of wire money. They were either seeking information or entering into contraversy as to whether or not they were coins. Nothing is mentioned in any of the articles concerning the Nedj pieces.

Wire money got its name because the first ones apparently were made at Lar in Persia. This form of money spread and at one time was very popular in parts of Persia, India - especially Bijapur, Ceylon, Maldive Islands, Hormus and other places. Some of these are long silver pieces, sometimes straight and sometimes curved. Those of Nedj are generally of a slightly different type, straight with slightly splayed ends of inferior silver or almost copper. All I have ever seen are badly worn, and I have never been able to read the inscription although I have seen hundreds of them. One bunch that we have is accompanied with a notation to the effect that they were "current about 1880, seventy or eighty to the Maria Theresa dollar". On another bunch is the notation "Toweelah or Long Bit of Hassa, used at Nedj in Arabia - Mohammed el-Saoud about A.D. 920". Outside of Palgrave I have never heard that the inscription is Carmathian, or that they were issued by the Carmathians.

This is absolutely all the information I can give you.

Very truly yours,

Curator.

EDWIN E. CALVERLEY
85 SHERMAN STREET
HARTFORD, CONN.

27 October 1930

Mr Howland Wood,
American Numismatic Society,
New York City

Dear Mr Wood:

Please accept my very cordial thanks for your kind and helpful letter. I am interested in the second notation you quote: "Towelah or long Bit of Hasa, used at Nejd in Arabia - Mohammed el-Saoud about A.D. 920." The 'Nedj' is of course for Nejd and the date is subject to suspicion.

As occasion offers I hope to continue my investigations in the Arabic books of the Kennedy School of Missions and I will be glad to share with you any new and definite information I may discover.

Very truly yours
Edwin E Calverley